

Proposed

Title:

Discipline and Incivility: An Analysis of Philippine Populism in the Digital Age

Dissertation Proposal by Fernan Talamayan (0789706)

Abstract:

The proposed dissertation will be a study of governmental practices of populist and fascist regimes in social media, or in broader terms, an analysis of power relations in social networks. It will present the Philippines as its case study—a country with a long history of social polarization and state neglect. Treating social media as its field, it will examine digital platforms not only as apparatuses of different institutions but also as spaces where individuals act upon other's actions. Social media will be consciously distinguished from social networks, recognizing that while social networks are found in social media, social networks transcend the bounds of digital platforms. Despite being primarily concerned with prevailing technologies that govern today's digital platforms, it will be an examination of both contemporary and historical periods, considering present phenomena as fundamentally intertwined with the past.

The proposed dissertation will take a particular interest in the presidency of Rodrigo Duterte. Central to its interrogation of governmentality under Duterte is the analysis of populism and fascism, as the study will identify him as a populist and fascist leader. For one, if the notions that Duterte is a "populist leader" (Curato, 2016a, 2016b, 2017) and a "fascist original" (Bello, 2016) will be adopted, and if the assumption that political communication styles frame the exploitation of social media platforms' design and algorithms will be accepted, the development and proliferation of digital media contents (which may manifest a mentality or rationality) and manipulation of algorithms that run in various social networking sites (a governmental technology) should then be navigated through and within the framework and history of such political approaches. Also, if governmentality in the Philippines truly has populist and fascist underpinnings, the role of language in affecting affects (i.e., "politics of anger" in Thompson, 2016) should be explored to explain governmental practices.